

Sunday, April 9

Third Day

**President David O. McKay:**

Elder Henry D. Taylor, Assistant to the Twelve, has just addressed us. The Choir and Congregation will now sing, "O Ye Mountains High," conducted by Elder Jay E. Welch. After the singing, Elder Theodore M. Burton will speak to us.

The Tabernacle Choir and the con-

gregation joined in singing the hymn, "O Ye Mountains High," conducted by Jay E. Welch, Assistant Conductor of the Choir.

**President David O. McKay:**

Elder Theodore M. Burton, Assistant to the Twelve, will now address us.

**ELDER THEODORE M. BURTON***Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

My brothers and sisters, I am conscious at this time of the responsibility that rests upon me. I pray that your faith might be exercised in my behalf that it might come to me as a wave of friendship, so that feeling your confidence and your love I might be able to say something that will be helpful and edifying to you.

As I have heard my brethren in this conference speak, these marvelous sermons, which have moved me at times to tears, have made me conscious of the feeling of responsibility they have tried to implant in our hearts. After all, we have been chosen for a great and a noble purpose. We are a chosen people, a people set apart, blessed, and ordained—in fact, foreordained—for a very special responsibility. Therefore, we must take this responsibility very seriously and realize that we were not chosen nor set apart to rule, but chosen and set apart to serve, to be the servants of all with whom we come in contact. We can best serve by teaching the divinity of Jesus Christ.

As I formerly began my organic chemistry lectures each fall at Utah State University, I used to bring to my class a small rectangular metal box. It was a breadbox, painted green, and as I brought the box into the lecture room and put it on the lectern, I would turn it so that the students could see written on the front of it "BREAD," and that aroused their curiosity. Every fall some student would accommodate me by asking "Why the bread, Dr. Burton?" And that would give me my cue to answer,

"This is the 'bread of life' of organic chemistry." This made them curious to know what I had in the box—sandwiches, cake, cookies, or perhaps actually bread for a chemical experiment.

Later on in the lecture, I opened the box and showed them what was in it. They were amazed to see that the box was filled with tinker-toys. Yes, the box was filled with balls and sticks and tight coils of stiff wire. In fact, they looked just like baby's playthings, and when youngsters came into my laboratory, and I had to amuse them, I would actually let them play with these as toys. The only difference between these toys and ordinary tinker-toys was that the balls had been painted various colors—green, red, blue, purple, black, white—and that the holes drilled in the balls were drilled at very precise angles.

Chemists use these tinker-toy units to construct models of complex organic compounds. When I wanted to lecture, for instance, on carbohydrates to show students the structure of sugar or the structure of starch or cellulose, I used these tinker-toy models to illustrate molecular structure. Or when I lectured on proteins and had to show them the structure of the amino acids or how these were put together to form protein molecules, I used these balls and sticks and pieces of wire to show how the molecule was built and constructed.

I once heard an internationally known chemist lecture to us on the structure of enzymes. He used just exactly these tinker-toys, building first one part and then another part, and putting the

parts together until he finally showed us exactly the thing that he wanted to demonstrate. Now, wouldn't it be ridiculous to criticize a chemist of such stature because he used such simple tools or to regard his ideas as childish because he used tinker-toy models to illustrate his ideas?

It is the use that determines the value of a thing—on the one hand, a child's plaything, but on the other hand a useful tool in the hands of a highly trained, competent scientist. A wise man looks at the results—not the tool. A simple tool in the hands of a skilled craftsman would be a marvelous thing. On the other hand, the finest of hand tools, or even a machine tool, in the hands of a clumsy oaf would be valueless.

Now, speaking of tools, God did not hesitate to use simple tools wherever he had to. We are the tools of God, and God has had to use men wherever he found them and as he found them. But the question comes to one's mind, Why didn't God, for instance, speak to Eli, for Eli was at that time the prophet and high priest in ancient Israel? But Eli could not or would not do as he was told. He had two sons, Hophni and Phinehas. They were heirs to the priesthood, but they were profligate and wicked, and Eli could not or did not control them.

Thus, the Lord had to choose someone else. He chose a small lad, and as God called, "Samuel," Samuel answered: "Speak, for thy servant heareth." (1 Sam. 3:10.) And soon, all Israel from Dan to Beersheba, knew that Samuel was a prophet of God.

When, later on, the great King Saul became disobedient and had to be set aside and replaced, Samuel, in his old age, because the Lord told him to go to the house of Jesse, would have chosen Eliab. But when he would have chosen Eliab, the Lord said to Samuel, ". . . Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature, because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." (*Ibid.*, 16:7.)

So Abinadab, Shammah—all seven sons of Jesse were passed over, and then the Lord told Samuel to choose David,

the shepherd lad, for he was obedient enough to listen. David was teachable, and so he became a useful tool in the hands of the Lord.

Why was John the Baptist chosen to be the Elias to announce Jesus Christ? There were twenty-eight high priests in Jerusalem between the years B.C. 37 and A.D. 68, yet not one of these learned, highly trained, capable men was chosen. And why was not Annas chosen or his son-in-law, Joseph Caiaphas? Read their own judgment recorded in the words of the scriptures when they sent officers to arrest Jesus, "Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him?"

"The officers answered, Never man spake like this man.

"Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived?

"Have any of the rulers of the Pharisees believed on him?

"But the people who knoweth not the law are cursed." (John 7:45-49.)

In other words, they were cursing those who believed the Son of God. In the pride of their learning they were not humble enough to believe, and God could not use such people. They had ears, but they could not hear. They had eyes, but they could not see. And so it was that God promised that in the last days he would restore all things of the kingdom, and just as the Lord had promised, he had to fulfil. So it came time for the Lord to keep the promise he had made and restore all things, but he needed someone on earth he could trust. He needed someone he could teach.

Why didn't he take the learned, trained theologians of that day—men trained in the ministry? For the same reason, brothers and sisters, that many times he cannot use some of us because we will not listen or we cannot listen.

Now hear the words of the Lord: "But behold, verily I say unto you, that there are many who have been ordained among you, whom I have called, but few of them are chosen.

"They who are not chosen have sinned a very grievous sin, in that they are

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walking in darkness at noon-day." (D&C 95:5-6.)

And that is just exactly what many of us do, when the gospel is so light and so bright around us that a child could see. Many times we close our eyes and close our ears and will not see or listen.

So, when it came time to fulfil all things, the Lord had to choose a simple farmer boy—Joseph Smith—one humble enough to listen, one obedient to God, one who would not rely on his own wisdom, but who would be willing to learn and to obey.

Now, these God-chosen men that I have mentioned were not ignorant men. They were plain men and untrained, but Joseph Smith, I say, was a learned man, as were those who have followed him in that office. A learned man is one well informed, one who knows the truth, one who has great knowledge, one who has learned the truth by instruction and by study and by experience.

Now, Joseph was instructed of God, and the greater the teacher, the greater the pupil may become. So Joseph, who was instructed of God, became a very, very learned man. These men we sustained at this conference as prophets, seers, and revelators, because they have been instructed of God, can instruct us, if we will but listen and open our hearts.

I make no plea for ignorance, brothers and sisters. I do not speak against education, formal training, or formal learning. I do not urge our people to reject a university education. I do not believe that mere possession of a doctor's degree makes a man spiritually unreliable. To the contrary, I speak as our Church leaders have always spoken. Get all the formal learning you can afford. Remember this, brothers and sisters, we cannot teach what we do not know. Get all the formal learning you can possibly afford, and if possible get a terminal degree. Believe implicitly in the word of the Lord as it has come to us. "The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth." (*Ibid.*, 93:36.)

"Whatever principle of intelligence

we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection.

"And if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come." (*Ibid.*, 130:18-19.)

"It is impossible for a man to be saved in ignorance." (*Ibid.*, 131:6.)

I see before me wonderful men who have been used in this Church as bishops and stake presidents, members of high councils and patriarchs, members of general boards, highly trained scientists, both men and women. A university education, I believe, would be desirable for every intelligent man and woman in the world, but I must speak the same warning that Paul spoke: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." (Col. 2:8.)

Now, brothers and sisters, I would like to stress this word, "rudiments," because I think this is a key to this passage. A rudiment means the beginning of knowledge. A little learning is a dangerous thing, and too many men and too many women who have become experts in a tiny field of learning think that because they are trained in that field of learning, they are experts in all fields of learning. Many men who are well-trained in one limited field feel that this equally qualifies them to express learned opinions in the field of faith and religion, although many of them have never done any studying nor taken a class in these subjects. So, I say that the problem is not that they know too much, but that they know too much of what just isn't so. Actually, they know too little. They have closed their minds to anything except the philosophies of men.

Now, brothers and sisters, in our Church in this day and age, when education is becoming more and more popular and more and more necessary, there is grave danger of intellectual apostasy. The problem is that of a closed mind, as I see it. Jacob taught this beautifully, as we read it in the Book of Mormon.

"O that cunning plan of the evil one!

O the vainness, and the frailties, and the foolishness of men! When they are learned they think they are wise, and they hearken not unto the counsel of God, for they set it aside, supposing they know of themselves, wherefore their wisdom is foolishness and it profiteth them not. And they shall perish.

"But to be learned is good if they hearken unto the counsels of God." (2 Nephi 9:28-29.)

That we should emphasize, "To be learned is good."

What causes intellectual apostasy? Why do some learned men and women turn from the faith? It is not learning, for there are hundreds of us, thousands of us, equally well-trained. It isn't being exposed to different ideas, for we too were exposed to these ideas in the finest universities of the land. Why, then, do they lose their testimony? Principally out of vanity and pride. They want to impress others with their learning. To put it indelicately, it is the problem of the swelled head, because that is exactly what the Prophet said.

"... whoso knocketh," Jacob said, "to him will he open; and the wise, and the learned, and they who are rich, who are puffed up" and that you see is just exactly what he said—"who are puffed up because of their learning, and their wisdom, and their riches—yea, they are they whom he despiseth; and save they shall cast these things away, and consider themselves fools before God, and come down in the depths of humility, he will not open unto them." (*Ibid.*, 9:42.)

Now remember, it isn't the simplicity of the tool that determines its value, but the skill of the workman who uses that tool. God, I am sure, would prefer to use the most skilled, the most able, the best-trained person that he could find, but that person must be humble and he must be teachable, and he must be willing to learn something new. We, with all our learning, stand just at the threshold of things that we need to know, just at the beginning of wisdom,

with the rudiments of wisdom in our hands. As Paul taught, the workman is more important than the tool.

"For ye see your calling, brethren," he said, "how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

"But . . . God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

". . . that no flesh should glory in his presence.

"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." (1 Cor. 1:26-27, 29-30.)

Over the library of the Utah State University stands in big gold letters a statement taken from the scriptures: "Get wisdom, and with all thy getting get understanding." (Prov. 4:7) We must feed the spirit as well as the mind and as well as the body. I plead with our youth, get learning, and with all your getting get understanding. Get learning of the spirit. Get learning of the mind. Get learning of the soul, and become a rounded man or a rounded woman, learned in all ways, for I testify to you this day that security, true security, comes from a knowledge of the divinity of Jesus Christ. This is the beginning of all learning and of all wisdom. This is the greatest knowledge, the greatest learning, the greatest comfort that men can have. If men have this knowledge in their hearts, they can withstand all the vicissitudes of life. No trial, no trouble can come, but that a man or a woman can withstand it. He can rise victorious if he has a love of Christ and a testimony of his divinity burning in his heart.

I testify to you that I know that Jesus has risen from the dead; that he lives and exists at this present time; that he reveals himself, has revealed himself, and continues to reveal himself to his servants, the prophets. I honor and sustain them, and pledge my loyalty to them, and bear this testimony to you in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.